



MADISON AREA ATARI USERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 56191, MADISON, WI 53705

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Survey Results: 8-bits Rule!

At the October meeting, we finally gave the survey, handing the questionnaire to approximately 36 people at the meeting, getting 31 back. dont expect me to give percentages, because some people own both a ST and 8bit, or have more than once 800XL, etc.

heres the Results:

8 bits are still king, as 31 65XLs, 11 800s, and 2 each of 400, 600XL, 1200XL and 130XE to make 50 8bits owned between 31 people, or 1.61 per person.

Of the 13 STs owned, 7 were 1040STs, and 6 were 520STs, a bit surprising. I'm sure there are more 520s out there than 1040s, but the people who own them just didnt show up I guess.

On the average, the length of ownership has been 4 years, ranging from 4 weeks to 8 years, usage of Atari computer 4 times a week, and the few who

took the time to reply, say they use them for games, word processing, and business, in that order.

You wanted more documentation on the disks of the month, and fewer buggy programs, and more utilities like printing programs, graphics, programming, and music. More ST support was also asked for. In the area of business support and music (MIDI) applications.

More how-to articles on hardware and software, and especially "more Atari news" was checked. In fact, these were the only 3 boxes checked out of 6 items on that question there were also calls for reprints from other newsletters, more graphics, and descriptions of the disks of the month, especially the ST.

On "what would you like MAAUG to do for you as a member", the biggest vote was for more SUPPORT from MAAUG, in the form of hardware backups, hands on

demos, programming problems, and "selling" Atari

I cannot emphasize enough that support in general was asked for. People wanted open communications in case of questions. that is what the Execs are for!

as for the MAAUG BBS going 1200 baud, there wasnt a single vote against it, but many said "as long as it supports 300 baud"...ok, no problem there!

Now as to the meetings themselves, suggestions were:

Name tags, more new member participation, more sigs, a question/answer session, shorter demos because they can be boring if your not playing (true!), more consistency, more variety, less talk and more action, and finally, Start on time!

On expectations from Atari, (bonus question), most replies asked for continuing 8bit support in the form of new Developments.

A Word or Two From the Chair...

Brrrr! Its getting cold outside again. The start of winter has descended on us a bit earlier than expected this year....

That means more computer use though. The winter months keep us indoors. So dust off the old (or new) Atari and get going!

Has anyone been keeping an eye on atari stock lately? I check it everyday in the paper and it surely hasn't ed any better than the rest of the market. It was at a high of 12 1/8 before the big dive, today its at 12. Quite a loss! Maybe its the time to buy?

Any volunteers for writing a monthly "what's new in the World of Atari" column? How about someone to oversee an advice column for the newsletter? It doesn't take much time and some of you out-there have been using your computers for a lot longer than me! I get at least 5 or 6 phone calls a month from users or prospective members with questions. So, I know there is a need for it! Any volunteers?

Well, let me know how you feel about what's going on at the meetings.. We need suggestions and input from you, all of you! See you at the next meeting.....

The Baud Warrior

by Craig Radi

In case you haven't noticed, the MAAUG BBS is temporarily down. The problem is that the board is crashing due to possible program errors or maybe the RAM going bad. If you weren't at the last meeting, Robert Defever brought in the new Atari SX1200 modem that he picked up from KAMTECH here in town. This modem features both hookups for the Atari 8bit and any other computer that has a RS232 port. It is Hayes compatible and has all the lights on the front side with the on/off switch located in the back. The big problem for us 8bit owners is that it doesn't come with software for the modem. "Cmon Atari" Bob stated that AMODEM with the right handler will work but it is not like EXPRESS which is one of the more popular programs. Word has it that Keith Ledbetter is working on a new version for the modem, so we will have to wait. It is nice to know that there is still some people that are willing to keep supporting the 8bit line, even if it isn't Atari it self. So if you are looking to get a modem for the first time it looks like 1200 BAUD is only about \$99.00 away. Call Kamal at KAMTECH here in town for the price, and you will be sailing away on a fast new modem. Oh, by the way, we are going to be upgrading the board soon to 1200 BAUD, as soon as we can get it back up and running. Till next month the BAUD WARRIOR says "Keep Your Modems On Line and Your Bits To The Sky!"

The FORTH Dementia

By Craig Radi

This article will deal with the new Programming SIG that was started up at the last meeting. For those that didn't get a FORTH disk, please let me know and we will swap a disk for a copy.

The last meeting might have seemed a little confusing for some of you, I guess that is just the way it is when it comes to looking at a new programming environment. I hope all of those that received their disks have had a chance to play around with them. If you have, you should be able to write your own COLON definitions, use the EDITOR, and use some of the PRINTER commands.

In case you haven't tried all of the words in your dictionary, plug in your printer and make sure you

have some paper in, and type the following. LPOPEN (Return) 0 40 SHOWLP (Return) This will print out all of the screens on your disk. Now you have the DOC's and a list of the words available to you. The best way to understand a word is to DECOMPILE the word and look at what it is saying, try the following. ZZ V (Return) 0200: V0201: VLST 0202: S: This is roughly what you should get back on your screen. If you look at the definition, it tells you that the word V is a compiled word for another word called VLST. VLST will list all the words in your dictionary to the screen. So as you can see you learn much from looking at the decompiled words in your VLST. I think for a first project, we should write a terminal program in FORTH so that we can logon to the MAAUG board and upload and download

our screens to the file sections. This way you never have to leave the FORTH environment to do other work. There is a bare bones term program on your disk, and I have yet to figure it out myself so maybe we can take the meat of the program and make it work for us. As I have assigned myself to the role of chairman of the SIG, I would like to keep this to the general meetings and the MAAUG board as far as work goes. This way it doesn't eat into our own schedules outside the meetings. I hope we find this fun to do, I know I get a kick out of it. See you all at the next meeting...

Atari News:Ataris Continuing Development.

An Overview by P.C. Newman

Atari's Continuing Developments For those of you who don't receive InfoWorld (and not many do, since it's the "PC News Weekly" and it's heavily IBM- and APPLE-oriented), in two consecutive issues they managed to say something about Atari. First, in the October 12th issue, they presented news of Atari's prototype (what else!) of a Transputer-based Workstation, which is designed to include many different parallel processor chips. This would allow many different processors to work on one application at the same time.

Under development by a 3rd-party is a Unix-like operating system that will include music and graphics. Atari is working on some proprietary coprocessor chips to supply the music and graphics functions. Atari hopes to begin production of the machines in the Spring of 1988 (where have we heard this before?) But don't hold your breath hoping to see one, because, as usual, the machine will first be marketed in England and Europe, supposedly in order to develop languages and applications before bringing it to the United States. One application that is supposedly being developed is a PC emulation program (does this begin to sound familiar?) Atari is also said to be developing a very high-resolution color monitor for use with the workstation. And a last little footnote seems to indicate that Atari plans on

providing for compatibility with the ST series of Atari computers. We'll see....In a more "current" and germane article, in the October 19th issue of Infoworld, there's a short blurb that Atari has BEGUN SHIPPING its Mega 2 and Mega 4 ST computers "which are designed especially for small businesses and desktop publishing applications", according to the article. The price quoted in the article, which presumably is the retail price, is \$1,699.95 for a Mega 2 with monochrome monitor and \$2,399.95 for a Mega 4 with monochrome monitor. A color monitor for either would boost the price by \$200.00. The most interesting line in the article (which I'm sure was provided entirely by Atari's public relations department) is that "the computers are available NOW from Atari business computer centers". This is more or less confirmation of the rumor that Atari DOES NOT intend to let these machines be sold by mail order. Another story I have heard is that Atari is insisting on warranty coverage and fairly sizable minimum orders from prospective dealers in order for the dealers to carry the Mega series. This may restrict it's availability to only the largest dealers who can afford to place larger orders of around \$20,000 or more at a time. It will be interesting to see if this isn't another case of Atari shooting themselves in the foot. So far, I have talked to three dealers in different areas of the state and ALL indicated that it is

possible that they will NOT carry the Mega series. Further, two of the three are carrying the Amiga 2000 and a third is "thinking about it". Apparently, these dealers have been VERY impressed with the support they have gotten from Commodore and are less than enamored with the "support" provided by Atari. Again, we'll see what develops, but right now, things don't look sunny for Atari in Wisconsin.....Finally, there's a brief article in the October 26th issue of Infoworld which coins a new term...."dribbleware". It seems that people have started to notice that more and more companies are taking the approach to marketing and letting "slip" some news about a new product, sometimes one they are only THINKING about developing. These companies say that it is important to let the business community know what is coming so they can budget for the new products. Most all say it is OK for them to announce the coming of new products PROVIDED that the products are actually delivered when promised. Atari still seems to lack a little in this department....Well, that's about it for this month. I'd like to tell you all the things on the disk of the month, but I haven't got it done yet. It SHOULD have a demo of the Colorburst program as well as several games, including a Stock market simulation game (which crashes, of course!) Also, by popular demand, we'll have a separate disk or two of clip art and fonts for Publishing Partner. Hope to see you there.....

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

This newsletter is produced by members of the Madison Area Atari Users Group. An Association of individuals with a common interest in using and programming Atari computers and other equipment. The Madison Area Atari Users Group is not affiliated with Atari Corporation or any other commercial organization.

All articles are written and donated by the membership. Occasionally, an article will be reprinted from another user group with appropriate credit to that user group. We extend the same courtesy to those groups who would like to reproduce portions of this newsletter. All articles reflect the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Madison Area Atari Users Group.

Your contribution of articles is actively encouraged. You may submit your articles by uploading them to the MAAUG BBS at 244-5642 or you may submit them on hardcopy printout. Picture files may also be uploaded for incorporation with the text. The deadline for all submissions is the 25th day of each month for inclusion in the next issue. For more information, write to Madison Area Atari Users Group Newsletter, P.O. Box 56191, Madison, WI 53705.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership is open to individuals and families who are interested in using and programming Atari computers. Your membership includes a subscription to this newsletter and access to the groups Public Domain Cassette, diskette, and publication libraries, as well as club level access to files on the MAAUG BBS. In addition to attending group functions and checking out materials, members are entitled to vote in club elections and to hold elected positions in the organization.

MEETING INFORMATION

MAAUG meetings are held once each month on the second Tuesday of the month. Meetings are generally held in the IMC of West High School, Madison, WI. The meeting room doors open at 7:00 pm and the meetings start promptly at 7:30 pm.

OFFICERS 1987-1988

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Attend the Club Meetings

Nov 10, room 225, west high School 7pm